**May Soul Matters: What Does It Mean to Be a People of Thresholds?**

**Group Business**

**Chalice Lighting/Centering silence**

**Opening Words**

Thresholds are about moments of deciding to change.

Those who stand at the threshold of life always waiting for the right time to change are like the person who stands at the bank of a river waiting for the water to pass so they can cross on dry land. Joseph B. Wirthlin

It's a dangerous business, Frodo, going out your door. You step onto the road, and if you don't keep your feet, there's no knowing where you might be swept off to. Bilbo Baggins, Lord of the Rings

And the day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom. Anais Nin

Our only security is our ability to change. John Lilly

If you do not change direction, you may end up where you are heading. Proverb, author unknown

**Check in**

**Introduction to the topic: What does it mean to be a people of thresholds**

What Does It Mean To Be A People of Thresholds? When encountering thresholds, we often talk as if our work is that of successfully “passing through” them. We speak of “making healthy transitions.” We seek out advice and support as we decide which thresholds to lean into and which to resist. The goal, it would seem, is figuring out how to travel forward in the right way.

But what if the true invitation of a threshold is not to successfully move from here to there, but instead to just sit and pause? What if we saw thresholds as resting places rather than as those moving walkways that transport us through airports? What if thresholds help us “become” by asking us to just “be” for a while? No moving. Just noticing and naming. Less traveling and more listening.

One of our Soul Matters ministers, the Rev. Sara LaWall, gets at this when she writes, “A [threshold is] a space to imagine a new way, and new self. Not moving or pushing but sitting and cultivating… [the goal] is to allow you space and time to reflect on your past, present, and future. To imagine a new beginning…”

And that imagining and naming may be more powerful than we usually assume. From the outside, it may seem that nothing has changed in our lives, and yet once that imaging takes shape in our minds and hearts, nothing is ever the same. The idea, the dream, the recognition suddenly takes on gravity. And that gravity creates an inevitability that transforms us, sometimes whether we like it or not.

Here’s how the writer Gary Zukav puts it, “At that moment [of realization], a threshold is crossed. What seemed unthinkable becomes thinkable... Once that realization has emerged, you can either honor it or ignore it, but you cannot forget it. What has become known cannot become unknown again.”

**Questions for the topic – answer without crosstalk. Pick one or two.**

1. What decisions are you facing given the reality of the Corona Virus?
2. What was your favorite threshold time in your life? How are you honoring the joy and gift of that time in your life right now?
3. You’ve left that door open for a long time now. What keeps coming through hasn’t been good for your soul for a while. What help do you need to finally close that door shut and lock it tight?
4. What is your next challenge in daring to be human?
5. Looking back on the last major threshold you crossed, was there something you now wish you’d brought along? Or maybe something you wish you’d left back there?
6. Were you a child that loved to visit dark attics and basements? Or were you the kid who would do anything to avoid it? How about today? Do the attics and basements of your life lure you or scare you?

**Additional Discussion with crosstalk**

**Closing Words**

A threshold is not a simple boundary; it is a frontier that divides two different territories, rhythms, and atmospheres. Indeed, it is a lovely testimony to the fullness and integrity of an experience of a stage of life that it intensifies toward the end into a real frontier that cannot be crossed without the heart being passionately engaged and woken up. At this threshold, a great complexity of emotion comes alive: confusion, fear, excitement, sadness, hope. *John O’Donohue*

**Likes and Wishes**

**Extinguish the chalice**

**Some additional readings you might want to include:**

There comes a time when the pain of continuing exceeds the pain of stopping. At that moment, a threshold is crossed. What seemed unthinkable becomes thinkable. Slowly, the realization emerges that the choice to continue what you have been doing is the choice to live in discomfort, and the choice to stop what you have been doing is the choice to breathe deeply and freely again. Once that realization has emerged, you can either honor it or ignore it, but you cannot forget it. What has become known can not become unknown again. *Gary Zukav*

We're already in the new age, she said. What does that mean? I said, It means we can stop waiting & start living, she said. But after she left, I still waited a little while more just to be safe. *StoryPeople*

The purpose of the journey is compassion. The return is seeing the radiance everywhere. *Joseph Campbell*

I am still every age that I have been. Because I was once a child, I am always a child. Because I was once a searching adolescent, given to moods and ecstasies, these are still part of me, and always will be… This does not mean that I ought to be trapped or enclosed in any of these ages… but that they are in me to be drawn on… Far too many people think that forgetting what it is like to think and feel and touch and smell and taste and see and hear like a three-year-old or a thirteen-year-old or a twentythree-year-old means being grown up. When I’m with these people I feel that if this is what it means to be a grown-up, then I don’t ever want to be one. Instead of which, if I can retain a child’s awareness and joy, and be fifty-one, then I will really learn what it means to be grown up. *Madeleine L’Engle, author of A Wrinkle in Time, wrote in A Circle of Quiet*

There's a trick to the Graceful Exit, I suspect. It begins with the vision to recognize when a job, a life stage, a relationship, is over and to let it go. It means leaving what's over without denying its validity or its past importance in our lives… It's hard to learn that we don't leave the best parts of ourselves behind, back in the dugout or the Capital or the office. We own what we learned back there, the experience and the growth are grafted onto our lives. And when we exit, we can take ourselves along. *Ellen Goodman*